

## 18/3 – Transport for West Midlands working to keep public transport moving in wake of coronavirus outbreak

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Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) has vowed to focus on keeping safe, clean, and functioning public transport available for those that need it amidst the continuing outbreak of coronavirus.

TfWM, which has a responsibility to oversee public transport in the West Midlands, as well as operate the Midland Metro service, is focusing all its attention on keeping public transport running for those that rely on it.

Despite a significant drop in use and the obvious staffing challenges due to the virus, transport bosses are committed to making sure services for key workers and those who rely on public transport to reach health, community, and educational facilities are still operational.

As part of this TfWM is in regular discussion with both bus and rail operators to make sure the region is as well covered as possible, and is also continuing to use the [Regional Transport Coordination Centre \(RTCC\)](#) to monitor the network for any significant disruption.

TfWM, which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), has strengthened its cleaning services to help tackle the spread of the virus, and is working with operators on their cleaning procedures and schedules to make sure the public transport services that do run are safe and clean.

Any TfWM staff member who displays symptoms of coronavirus is being told to self-isolate, as per the Government's advice.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "Although the Government has been clear that people should avoid public transport and work from home where possible, for many this is simply not an option – particularly key workers who are doing the most phenomenal job on the front line.

"I have therefore instructed all TfWM staff to focus their attention on keeping public transport functioning, and making sure those services that do run are safe and clean. Through the RTCC and our strong working relationship with operators, I am confident we will be able to continue to run public transport services so long as the Government allows.

"TfWM is well equipped for a situation like this, and I want to reassure the public that staff are doing all they can to keep the West Midlands moving."

Councillor Ian Ward, the WMCA's portfolio lead for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council, added: "It is clear that the West Midlands' public transport network will not be able to operate at full capacity during the coronavirus outbreak – and nor is there demand for it to as the numbers using public transport are already beginning to fall.

"However there are significant numbers of people across the region who continue to rely on public transport through this challenging period, and TfWM is working with operators, local authorities, and the Government to make sure we continue to provide services for those who need it most, and that those services that do run are safe and clean.

"These are extraordinary times, but I would like to thank all staff at TfWM, and of course those at operators such as West Midlands Trains and National Express, who are working round-the-clock to make sure safe, clean, and functioning public transport is available for those who need it the most."

*Photo credit: Transport for West Midlands*